

REPORT OF  
THE NAEB

IN-SCHOOL  
WRITERS' SEMINAR

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RADIO STATION KSLH  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

JUNE 7-11, 1954

REPORT

On the

IN-SCHOOL PROGRAM WRITERS' SEMINAR

Sponsored by

The National Association of Educational Broadcasters

Financed by a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation

Held at

Station KSLH, St. Louis, Missouri  
June 7-11, 1954

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14 Gregory Hall  
Urbana, Illinois  
September, 1954

Acknowledgment

The Editor of this Report wishes to express his gratitude to Miss Marguerite Fleming for her farsighted planning in making the materials for the Report available, and for the forethought and skillful organization which made the entire Seminar not only possible, but both pleasant and profitable. He would like to express his thanks, too, to Mr. Charles Gilbert of Station KSLH, for his painstaking work as the official Recorder of the Seminar, and to acknowledge his debt to Miss Betty Girling, to whose complete comments on the Seminar the 'Conclusions and Recommendations' section owes much.

Edward Stasheff  
Ann Arbor, Michigan  
September 14, 1954

### Introduction

The NAEB In-School Radio Program Writers' Seminar of 1954 was held at Station KSLH, St. Louis, Missouri, June 7-11, 1954. It was conducted by a Director and three Consultants, and was addressed by a number of guest speakers, half of them drawn from the St. Louis Public Schools. The Seminar was attended by 20 writers, representing 18 educational stations from 14 states. It was made possible as a regularly budgeted item in the NAEB grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

The need for the Seminar was first voiced by the NAEB In-School Program Committee, and was later reviewed and approved by the NAEB Board of Directors. It was felt that the increasing emphasis on the admittedly urgent problems of educational television, since 1952, had created a tendency to overlook the needs of educational radio in many quarters. A Seminar devoted to meeting some of those needs, specifically the problems of the writers of in-school radio programs, would not only help many of the NAEB member stations, but would also have far-reaching effects on the in-school programs received by a growing in-school audience which was recently found to be well over a million. In actual execution it was found impractical to exclude television completely as will be noted in this report.

Mr. Graydon Ausmus, NAEB President, then appointed Miss Marguerite Fleming, Director of Station KSLH and both a member of the NAEB Board of Directors and Chairman of the In-School Program Committee, to assume the responsibility of organizing such a Seminar. Miss Fleming and the committee secured the following Seminar leaders: Miss Gertrude F. McCance, Supervisor of School Broadcasts, Department of Education, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Miss Betty T. Girling, Director, Minnesota School of the Air, Station KUOM, University of Minnesota; Mrs. Helen Stanley, formerly Script Editor, Wisconsin School of the Air, and Instructor in Speech and Radio Writing at the University of Wisconsin; and Edward Stasheff, Associate Professor of Speech, University of Michigan, who served as Director of the Seminar.

Miss Fleming and the Committee spent nearly a month in correspondence with these staff members determining the philosophy, policy and schedule of the four-day Seminar. The basic problem to be resolved was whether the Seminar should be a "How-to-Do-It" workshop type of meeting, with emphasis on techniques of educational radio writing, or a "refresher" type of meeting, with emphasis on clarification of the philosophy of educational scriptwriting, mutual inspiration through the exchange of opinions and ideas, and discussion of the place of the writer in education and in society.

Another point to be resolved was whether the assembled writers could, and should, in the short span of four days, attempt any group writing or program planning. The Allerton House Conference of 1952 had gone on record as favoring the creation of two program series under the aegis of NAEB, one on Canadian-American Relations, and one on Conservation of Natural and Human Resources. Some members of the staff thought it might be possible for some writers in attendance at the Seminar to meet in groups and discuss possible program ideas for either or both of these series; others felt that the pressure of time would not permit it.

When preliminary planning had resolved all points of difference except these two issues, it was decided to turn to the twenty people who had been chosen by a special committee of the NAEB to attend the Seminar, and to the managers of the stations which these people represented. (A list of Seminar participants may be found in Appendix 1.) Accordingly, the station managers were asked to state what they hoped the writers they were sending to the Seminar would get out of it. The writers were asked what they hoped to get out of the Seminar, and whether they felt that working on either of these two program series, or on projects of their own, would be most desirable.

A tabulation of replies received revealed that considerably more than half did think it feasible to attempt group planning of either the series on Canadian-American Relations or on the Conservation of Natural and Human Resources. Accordingly, provision was made for group planning sessions, in the four-day advance schedule, with the understanding that if the projects did not work out, the time originally allotted to them could be diverted to other activities.

The basic plan provided for an orientation session on the first evening of the Seminar, at which the members of the group would meet the staff, their St. Louis hosts, representatives of the NAEB, and (most important of all) each other. In addition, the Seminar would be addressed, at this opening session, by Professor Harold Hand of the University of Illinois, who had provided inspiration and enthusiasm at opening sessions of other conferences.

Thereafter, the plan called for morning sessions from 9:00 a.m. to noon, with approximately half the time devoted to talks by the Seminar staff or guest speakers, and the remainder spent in question-and-answer periods or in discussion of the problems brought up by the talks. Afternoons were to be given over largely to continuation of the discussions, with a little over an hour reserved for work on the two program series described above. Finally, evenings were to be devoted to auditioning the tape recordings of previously produced educational programs which both participants and staff members had brought with them, along with a few outstanding tapes from other sources. Analysis and discussion were to follow the playing of each tape. As may be seen from the program schedule which was actually followed (Appendix 2), this plan was followed on the whole.

#### Digests of Talks and Discussions

While it is impossible, no matter how valuable and desirable it might be, to reproduce the thousands of words of good counsel and inspiring suggestion which were spoken in the course of the Seminar, an attempt is made herewith to reproduce

some of the particularly striking phrases and to present summaries of some of the important talks.

The opening orientation session was attended not only by the twenty participants in the Seminar and the five staff members, but also by the entire staff of Station KSLH and a dozen administrators from the St. Louis Public Schools, including Mr. Philip J. Hickey, Superintendent of Schools, who presented the official welcome to the group.

Dr. Harry Skornia, Executive Director of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, also welcomed the group, and expressed appreciation to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation whose generosity had made the Seminar possible. He described the Seminar as "an historic jumping-off place for in-school broadcasting," pointing out that it was the first such conference to be devoted to the problems of the in-school radio writer. He added, "I hope you will all feel the great responsibility which rests on your shoulders and will come up with ideas and techniques to implement the growth of school broadcasting."

Miss Gertrude McCance, Supervisor of School Broadcasts, Department of Education for the Province of Manitoba, Canada, outlined the wide and varied contributions which school broadcasts could make to the educational growth of boys and girls and emphasized the responsibility which rested on program planners and writers to present only the highest quality production and writing. "We have an opportunity," she said, "to bring to the classroom stimulation for the mind and imagination and to help develop critical appreciation of good radio in the minds of our students."

Miss Betty Girling, Director of the Minnesota School of the Air, reminded the group that the fundamental unit of all communication media is the writer. She called upon the writers present to accept an important responsibility. "In the world today, words are being used to confuse, to mislead. As writers for educational radio we must clarify, present facts in a logical way, be rational. But

as writers we must do more than that. We must write as potently as we can, as wisely as we can, as inspiringly as we can."

Mrs. Helen Stanley, formerly Script Editor of the Wisconsin School of the Air, pointed out that "Radio began as an engineer's baby - as an electronic miracle. But radio has become a medium for the writer, for the transmission of ideas. And as radio has come of age, we radio writers have arrived. We are a profession, and an important one."

The feature address of the evening was delivered by Dr. Harold Hand, Professor of Education at the University of Illinois. Dr. Hand's address was entitled "How Well Do You Know Your Audience?" By "audience" he meant, for the assembled writers of in-school programs,

- a) The teachers who decide whether or not to use the writer's materials.
- b) The pupils of the teachers who do decide to use those materials.

His basic points were that:

- a) If they are to be used, these materials must help the teachers to get done the things they believe a good school should do.
- b) If they are to be useful to pupils, these materials must be suited to the interest, needs, and capabilities of the pupils.

Dr. Hand then summarized some of the things that teachers believe a good school should do.

I. The good school attempts to serve all the children of all the people.

A) These children differ in many ways which are significant for education. Unless radio writers take these significant differences into account, their materials cannot be very helpful to the teacher who is trying to serve all the children of all the people.

B) Some of these educationally significant differences are:

- 1) The kinds of children in the school, who differ in:
  - a) What they need to learn.
  - b) What they are able to learn.
  - c) What they want to learn.

2) The kinds of homes from which the children come.

- a) We have been accused of trying to teach a middle-class school for middle-class children only.
- b) Children who come from different welfare levels have very different needs.
- c) Children have greatly varying mental levels; in one fifth grade class, mental age varied over an eight-year spread.

3) The kinds of "problem worlds" represented by the children vary greatly

II. The good school attempts to provide a "pay dirt" curriculum.

A) There are certain things which must get done or society will retrogress and decay. These we call "basic social processes." Not a one of these processes can be carried on unless the people know, believe, and do certain things, rather than their opposites. Since it is only through education that knowledge can be gained, beliefs engendered, and behavior induced, the carrying on of the basic social processes necessary to societal survival and improvement rests on education and can be accomplished only through education. To be of real help to teachers in providing a "pay dirt" curriculum, then, the radio writer's materials must usefully relate to these basic social processes.

B) Some of these basic social processes are:

- 1) Teaching youngsters to think and communicate. Only the schools seem able to do this in our modern society.
- 2) Social Cement - the teaching of democratic values. The schools have a tremendous opportunity to intellectualize these values: why they are there, the evidence that they are there, what they mean, what our tradition is.
- 3) Acquiring skills to make a living.
- 4) Physical security (particularly important at a time when so many students are concerned over military service.)

- 5) Learning how to live together in peace and decency.
- 6) Rearing children.
- 7) Spending leisure time.
- 8) Acquiring spiritual satisfaction.
- 9) Governing and government.
- 10) Passing on our cultural heritage.

III. The good school patterns its instructional procedures on what is known about the conditions which make for effective learning.

- A) The evidence from experimental research (and from common sense, too) points to certain conditions which are necessary for effective learning. Unless the radio writer's materials take account of these necessary conditions and are in consonance with them, the materials cannot be of much real help to teachers.
- B) Some of the more important of these conditions necessary for effective learning are:
  - 1) Concomitant learnings -- feelings of pleasure, or of boredom and distaste acquired at time of learning.
  - 2) What you ask a child to learn must bear relation to the things he needs and wants.
  - 3) If youngsters have a hand in shaping the purposes of what they learn and planning the processes, they tend to learn better.
  - 4) Learning is more efficient and stays with them longer if the materials are challenging.
  - 5) Youngsters learn more readily and their learning stays with them longer if the internal organization of the school is good.
  - 6) Learning is more effective if it emphasizes principles.
  - 7) Learning is at maximum when the rhythm of learning is understood, when the planned program includes learning, relaxing, and activity geared to individual differences.

IV. The good school brings parents and other laymen into consultation and participation in shaping its purposes and in evaluating its products.

A) Viewed as a process, the school undertaking has three principal components:

- 1) Deciding what purposes are to be served.
- 2) Achieving these purposes through good teaching.
- 3) Appraising the product to determine in what respects and to what extent these purposes have been achieved.

B) Component No. 1, deciding what purposes are to be served, is fundamentally a question of public policy. At root, the question of educational objectives is the question of "What kind of young men and women do we want our boys and girls to become?" This is why the good school attempts to bring parents and other laymen into consultation and participation in deciding this question. The educational radio writer must ask himself whether he is producing program materials which are helpful to teachers in accomplishing this necessary, difficult and delicate task.

C) What constitutes good teaching is a technical question, to be settled by the professionally trained teachers, not by laymen. But all laymen are entitled to know why such-and-such constitutes good teaching, and the good school attempts to communicate this information. Here, too, the radio writer has an important part to play. Does he produce program materials which are helpful for this purpose?

D) Whether or not the boys and girls become the kind of young men and women that the people of the community desire is a question which only the laymen can answer. The good school recognizes this, seeks to

encourage such appraisal, and attempts to discover what the community thinks in respect to its performance. What program materials does the radio writer produce which would be helpful here?

"Finally, if they are to be useful to pupils, the radio writer's materials must be suited to the interests, needs and capabilities of the pupil listeners. To what extent can radio writers prepare materials which involve and satisfy the purposes, the techniques and the evaluation of the educational process? To the extent that we succeed in getting and doing these things, we will be very welcome in the classroom. If we don't, we won't be welcome, and won't even get in."

At the conclusion of this address, the first session was adjourned.

Most of the discussion on Tuesday, June 8th, was led by Miss McCance. Since she could be with the Seminar only on Tuesday and for a brief part of Wednesday, it was felt that maximum use should be made of her services while she could be present.

Miss McCance spent the first part of her talk in the morning session explaining and describing the system of educational broadcasting in Canada and pointing out the ways in which it differs from American in-school radio. Some of the differences she pointed out were:

- A) School broadcasts in Canada have developed as a co-operative effort between the provincial Departments of Education and the national system of broadcasting, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Programs are presented on four levels:
  - 1) Provincial: These programs are planned by the Departments of Education particularly for schools within the province. These tie in very closely with the courses of studies.

2) Regional: The ten provinces are grouped into three regions and programs are planned and presented jointly. Provincial curricula are taken into consideration and as far as possible programs fit into the general program.

3) National: These programs are presented by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on the advice of the National Advisory Council on School Broadcasts. The subject of these programs centers around Canadian citizenship and unity. The complete presentation of a Shakespearian play is part of the National series each year.

4) International: These are international exchange programs from members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

B) Each Provincial office produces one-half hour of programming a day. School broadcast supervisors plan programs to aid teachers - a few are of a direct teaching type, but most of the programs are planned to supplement the work of the teacher, especially on the imaginative side.

C) School Broadcast Supervisors have the advantage of working with the best producers, actors and technicians in the CBC. For dramatic scripts, professional writers are used and since programs are planned at least one year in advance, these writers are able to sit in on the early planning conferences of the educational "experts" in the various subject matter fields. The philosophy is to use the daily half-hour of broadcast time to present something from which even the best-qualified teachers feel their classes can profit. Script writers are provided with the basic material to be used in each program, and they are able to consult with the Supervisor of School Broadcasts and class-room teachers at any time. Then the writers are given free rein in the treatment of these materials, but know full well that School Broadcast Supervisors do not hesitate to ask for re-writes.

In reply to questions as to whether Canadian school broadcasts used students, Miss McCance stated that this was very seldom done. In two Manitoba music series, student choruses are used. As for using teachers at the microphone, this would be only in non-dramatic program formats. In a speech or music program, Miss McCance might use a teacher who was particularly expert in the field, who knew the classroom, was a fine teacher, and had a good radio personality and exceptional delivery. Parenthetically, Miss McCance pointed out that unlike the United States, Canada has few radio courses in high schools, and that few, if any Canadian universities offer degrees in either radio or speech.

Among reminders that her office might give to writers, Miss McCance listed:

- A) Use a small number of characters to avoid confusion in the mind of the young listeners (and to save expense).
- B) Be careful about the use of sound effects and music, lest they interfere with the informational message. (Supervisors feel free to ask a CBC producer to reduce sound or music if they feel the background is too loud to permit easy understanding of the dialogue.)
- C) Be aware of where listening peaks come in a program.
- D) Use colloquial speech, but avoid grammatical errors and the unnecessary use of slang.
- E) Visit classrooms and become acquainted with the maturity level of students for whom the broadcasts are intended.

Reminders given to teachers included:

- A) The necessity for teachers to be acquainted, at the beginning of each school year, with the programs for that year. This is possible through the use of school broadcast manuals provided free of charge by each Department of Education.

B) The necessity to exercise discrimination in the choice of broadcasts for their classes. Two programs per week are considered the maximum. It is sometimes a problem to get teachers to choose appropriate broadcasts for their grade levels.

C) It is deplorable to use the broadcast time to check records or do other clerical work. Teacher participation is just as important as student participation. Accordingly, script-writers often seek to include the teacher by using such devices as asking her to repeat a line or to write something on the board.

Miss McCance also pointed out that she felt school broadcasts are made more effective by the inclusion of some form of audience participation. This is particularly true up to junior high school grades. Provincial school broadcast departments frequently supply supplementary aids--e.g. mimeographed maps for students to follow when listening to a social studies broadcast involving the journey of an explorer, song sheets for pupils to follow on the music broadcasts, scripts to follow during the French language broadcasts.

In response to a question about the methods used in Canada to determine what subjects should be covered for a following year, Miss McCance explained that any or all of the following might be used:

- 1) Try to ascertain the needs by general questionnaires to teachers.
- 2) Secure suggestions from radio committees.
- 3) Secure suggestions from key teachers. (Especially selected teachers who have expressed their willingness to have their classes used as special listening posts. Reports from these teachers are given special consideration).

In the selection of topics it is important to keep in mind those subjects which are best suited to the medium of radio.

Miss McCance added: "Each year, we in the Province of Manitoba try to present one experimental series. This year our experiment will center around clear thinking. We shall do what we can to combat the general tendency toward conformity. We want to stimulate the pupils to think and to develop as individuals. We encourage student, as well as teacher comment on all programs and welcome constructive criticism."

Wednesday, June 9th, was devoted to the writer's problems of organization: organization of material, organization of an individual program, organization of a series. Mrs. Helen Stanley led the morning session, which was concerned with the organization of materials as a preparation for script writing. Miss Betty Girling led the afternoon session, which was concerned with the factors which determine organizing a program or a series. After each of these two general sessions, guests from the St. Louis Public Schools, who work closely with Station KSLH, spoke briefly on their specialties.

Mrs. Stanley first discussed the value of the "Pre-Writing Period" as a necessary session of thought and inspiration. "As creative people, we must re-create for ourselves a child's world. Children today have problems and feelings that were not ours. We must re-discover this child's world each year we work." The danger, she felt, lay in thinking of children as statistics. Instead, the writer needs to personalize the individual child in his audience; to see him, to know and to love and to write for one particular child he knows.

Within this frame of reference, the writer should then take advantage of radio's intimacy, its personal appeal, by using intimate, personal subject matter. The writer needs to be sensitive to experiences and material around him in order to write characters and situations which are real. "Children have a dreadful insight and an awesome wisdom."

As an example of the writer's preparation and organization of a series, Mrs. Stanley discussed a series she had written for Station WHA, "Adventures in Our Town." The series came about in response to an interest in the social attitudes of post-war 1946 children expressed by the Wisconsin State Department of Instruction. The series was to be concerned with problems of living together, of tolerance and understanding, of a reaffirmation of the inherent dignity of the individual.

Preparation, before writing began, included sending out a questionnaire to teachers, principals and administrators, offering a check-list of program subjects. Those who were circulated responded by checking a list of suggested topics for which they felt there was the greatest need. After topics were suggested, it was necessary to determine a format which would appeal to the emotions of children. After considering and discarding a number of formats, Mrs. Stanley and her colleagues settled on a serial-type of drama, with a complete incident in each program, but with a continuing cast of characters. The action was set in a mythical small town in Wisconsin, using a familiar child's world to involve scenes which pointed up problems the children were meeting in their own lives, and showing how the family, the community, gangs, school, buddies and other groups solved them. Mrs. Stanley pointed out certain salient features of the series:

- 1) The series was designed not to change social attitudes immediately but to have a cumulative effect.
- 2) Children were used as characters because the young listeners would then identify them; some character or some situation in each script might be counted on to provide each listener with identification.
- 3) Moralizing was avoided; the characters faced situations, then worked out their problems together, meeting a crisis and solving it through teamwork.

- 4) Real situations were used: the destruction of property at Halloween, for example; or, in another vein, the celebration of Passover in which a gentile child visited the home of his Jewish friend, as a means of new understandings. The framework of the series set-up a year-round calendar of events, geared to seasons and holidays, seasonal celebrations, sports, and activities.
- 5) Basically, the series set up problems, showed conflicts, and solved the issues with the characters experiencing a new understanding. Adults did not prescribe or moralize; the boys and girls in the series worked their problems out themselves, often without parental suggestion.

Mrs. Stanley then played a tape recording of the program "Girl Trouble" from the series, after which the group discussed both the program and the script-writing points which it had developed.

In the course of the morning, the Seminar was addressed by Miss Esther Aschmeyer, Consultant in Social Studies at Harris Teachers College and Co-Chairman of the Social Studies Radio Planning Committee which works closely with the staff of Station KSLH in planning social studies radio programs for the elementary level. Miss Aschmeyer described the basic organization of the committee, which is composed of teachers, principals and social studies consultants. Some actively teach the subject at the present time, others worked in the preparation of the social studies curriculum for the St. Louis schools.

These people bring to their meetings the needs of the classroom, and discuss these needs in terms of what radio programs can do to meet them. Out of such discussions come the area, the grade level, and the general content of a series which they want to have broadcast during the following year. For greater efficiency, the committee divides into sub-committees, working on the primary, intermediate, and upper grade levels.

Members of Radio Planning Committees for the various subject areas are appointed by the Superintendent's office with the advice of the Station Director, the Committee Chairman, and sometimes the other members of the committee. Membership on the Planning Committees rotates, as do the Chairmanships. Staff writers at Station KSLH are assigned by the Station Director, who receives the program requests from the Planning Committees, and fits the suggestions from all the Committees into a workable schedule of broadcasts. Committees often suggest many more series than can be used in one school year and some may be held over and used at a later time.

A Program Co-ordinator from the station sits in on all the main Planning Committee meetings to guide thinking along general radio-wise lines, and to advise on matters of production practicality. The writer may then work with the Co-ordinator, directly with members of the Committee, or with both. The Committee is always available for further consultation at the writer's request.

The afternoon session on June 9th was led by Miss Betty Girling, who approached the problem of organizing material from a content and format point of view. Ideas, she felt, may come from teachers, from the station staff, or from members of the community. A station gets an idea or hears of one; realizes a need, or discovers one. In both cases, the problem may be stated as: "How do you put flesh and bone on a dream?"

Suggestions Miss Girling offered on this point, particularly when it involved a new area, were:

- 1) Spread out, get other concepts, approach your problem from many angles before you settle on one final idea.
- 2) Don't get stuck on approach or bogged down in a mire of ideas. Decide on what seems best for the child.
- 3) Base your decision as to approach on the answer to the all-important question: "What is the series supposed to do?"

Miss Girling offered these specific suggestions for laying out a series:

- 1) One technique is to list and organize the script topics in terms of the changes in behavior the writer hopes will come about: a new appreciation, a fuller understanding, a new point of view. Just as each script should build to a conclusion, so the entire series should reach a final conclusion.
- 2) There is need for a differentiation between accuracy and truth. If the writer is going to be completely accurate about the Gettysburg address and the way in which Lincoln delivered it, he may well miss the truth of the words and the greatness of the ideas. In talking to children, we often get accuracy and lose the truth. It is important not to overlook the picture of a man, an idea, a truth, or an era, in our eagerness to set down a number of facts.

In planning an individual program, Miss Girling offered the following suggestions:

- 1) Don't plan to talk down to children, to simplify beyond effectiveness. Have a healthy respect for children and their ability to comprehend.
- 2) Work with conflict, but make it situation conflict, not personality conflict, for several reasons. Situation conflict is more objective. When personality conflict must be used to get the point across, be sure to motivate it and justify it. But keep in mind always that personality conflicts provide risky, touchy ground, because the child's own world may be far more receptive to conflict than we know. Give the young listeners decency, honesty, kindness.
- 3) The format of a script should be determined by its subject matter. The beginning writer tends to rely on drama, truly a fine art and an effective medium, but there are other ways of being highly interesting.

Miss Girling then described a number of non-dramatic formats which had proved highly successful on the Minnesota School of the Air, such as interviews with prominent personages, speaking not on their specialties but on general topics in which they had vital interest: Eddie Cantor on brotherhood; Gene Autry on citizenship; Ralph Bunche as a living voice of living history. She described the use of students on subjects on which they were expert panelists, from baby sitting to eighteen-year old voting, and paid tribute to the effectiveness of tape recorders used in the field to get important citizens to talk about things other than their professions. As examples, she mentioned a priest speaking on housing and the Governor of the state speaking on religion. In each case, the eminence of the person lent authority; the fact that he was speaking on something not in his own field of specialization but something about which he felt very keenly lent added impact.

- 4) In short, the writer should start with a goal, with an idea, with a purpose. Then he can determine whose life story or what experience can bring out that idea, accomplish that purpose, provide the flesh and blood. Only then should the writer determine what format will fit best, whether it be drama, historical drama or biography, interview or documentary.

Finally Miss Girling considered the problem of gearing this type of broadcasting to the curriculum. A social studies series, beamed to the 4th through the 9th grades, provided in the teachers' handbook a set of questions which could be selected by the teacher, with a number of them used at the various grade levels. In general, Miss Girling felt that a university-operated station, broadcasting to the school systems of many cities, could not be too specific in linking a series with the work covered in a given grade. "If we motivate, enrich, give background; if we bring into the classroom material which teachers cannot get in any other

way, we may leave the specifics of the curriculum to the teacher. Surely the students are in a better frame of mind to study if they have been stimulated by a fine radio program."

In the discussion which followed, there was a good deal of exchange of opinions on this point. Most of the writers who had come from university stations agreed with this point of view, while those from stations operated by school systems inclined toward a program meant for one grade, or two at most, with closer linking with the curriculum.

The guest speaker for the afternoon session was Dr. John Whitney, Consultant in Science at Harris Teachers College, Chairman of the Elementary Science Radio Planning Committee of the St. Louis Public Schools, and Chairman of the TV Science Planning Committee for station KETC, the St. Louis community educational television station. Dr. Whitney spoke briefly on the experimental participation program, which is the backbone of the science broadcasts produced by KSLH. As an example of how radio can implement a new course of study he discussed a new science curriculum which had the purpose of increasing emphasis on simple experiments. Radio was used to encourage teachers to use the new course of study and three results had become apparent:

- 1) The radio programs developed increased interest in the experimental approach to the study of elementary science.
- 2) The radio listening had taken students and teachers away from a page-by-page study of science texts.
- 3) The simple, yet interesting, experiments described and recommended in the broadcasts had removed the fear some teachers had felt about performing classroom experiments.

The second segment of the afternoon session was spent in hearing from various members of the Seminar who described particular problems in planning and writing particularly successful series, and in listening to tape recordings of typical programs from those series.

The last part of the afternoon was spent in a survey of teachers' guides, manuals and handbooks, led by Edward Stasheff. Mr. Stasheff described and showed samples of the various types of publications distributed by educational stations in conjunction with their broadcasts. These types include:

- 1) The simple bulletin, providing little more than dates, times, and the names of programs, with perhaps a short sentence about each individual program.
- 2) The "sampler" type, such as the one issued by WBOE, Cleveland, which lists program titles of the coming year's series. A fuller guide sheet on each specific program goes out several days in advance of the first broadcast of each program.
- 3) A full handbook or manual for a specific series, which outlines each program, provides background material, and suggests preparation of the class and post-broadcast follow-up activities. One variation is the group of manuals, for several series, in one binding.
- 4) The weekly bulletin which points up special weekly shows.

In all events, the needs of the teachers determine the type of handbook best suited to each station. For example, in one state, material on the history of that state filled a large manual and was a source book for the classroom teachers. But regardless of the type, the successful handbook makes the teacher's work more effective and easier, and makes the program more attractive, thus more likely to be used.

Materials found in a great many manuals seem to show the following elements in most cases:

- 1) A brief description of each program.
- 2) Enrichment material for the teacher, frequently digested from source books which are also listed.
- 3) Suggestions for preparing the class for the broadcast.

- 4) Stimulating titles, both for the programs and for the various sections of the guide to each program.
- 5) Follow-up activities in a wide variety of areas, including art work, composition, simple research, and emulation of the program.
- 6) Suggested books, trips, and areas of enrichment.
- 7) Songsheets, word lists, translations, etc.

The evening session was spent in listening to selected educational programs and in analyzing the writing techniques employed in each.

On Thursday morning, June 10th, the Seminar met at the temporary studios of Station KETC, Channel 9. These studios are on the Washington University campus, and the members of the Seminar were the guests of the KETC staff. While the Chief Engineer of the station showed half the group about the studios, control room, projection room, recording room, etc., the Station Manager, Mr. Richard Goggin, addressed the other half of the group. The two halves were then reversed, giving both sections the benefits of both the tour and the talk.

In his address Mr. Goggin explained the organization of KETC as a community non-commercial station, in contrast to a university station, one run by a public school system, or one run by a non-commercial or educational foundation. Mr. Goggin gave his reasons for feeling that the only non-commercial station in a large urban area should be run by and for the entire community.

He then explained the administrative organization of KETC and its financing, which comes from donations from individuals and organizations, and from an allocation of \$1 per pupil per year from the public school systems, parochial schools and private schools in the St. Louis area.

The programming originates in committees of supervisors, principals and teachers, who determine the areas to be covered and who select teacher specialists for each area. The specialists then are grouped into subject and grade

level committees, to determine the general content of a series; to select the grade level for which it is to be beamed; and to help select the teaching personnel who will appear on the program. KETC does not use "package shows" prepared by individual schools or systems, but assigns a staff member, a writer-producer, to work with the TV Planning Committee which has been developing each series. When ideas have crystallized, and when talent has been selected, the station's writer-producer will work with the Planning Committee's chairman on the details of each individual program. These Planning Committees include representatives of the St. Louis, Belleville and other public school systems, as well as representatives of the parochial, Lutheran, County and private schools.

The station cooperates with committees in surveying television receivers, and in making recommendations. Specifications include 21-inch screens, simplified controls, etc. Many schools have already bought either one set per floor, with a TV viewing room on each floor, or one set per building. Money has come from Board of Education funds, or from donations by individuals or PTA groups.

Mr. Goggin also introduced Mr. Martin Schneider, one of his staff writer-producers, who described the specific way in which he had worked with one of the TV Planning Committees in planning and producing a series which had been kinescoped for use after the station went on the air.

The morning session concluded with both halves of the Seminar merged again to view two sample kinescope programs, one produced in the early experimental days with single-system sound, and one produced more recently with its sound track recorded separately on 16 mm. magnetic tape. The superiority of the latter was readily apparent to the entire group.

The visit to KETC created a great deal of interest in the problems of writing and producing educational television programs, although most members of the Seminar had had little contact with TV in the past and did not anticipate being involved in television in the near future.

For the afternoon session, the Seminar was divided into three groups. Over a third of the members had requested a session on the fundamentals of radio writing, since it developed that although they were currently charged with the responsibility of writing whatever local scripts were being produced on their respective station, they had had little or no formal training in radio writing. Some of them had been so recently given radio writing assignments for their school stations that they had had no opportunity even to master the standard texts in the field.

Accordingly, Miss Girling met with this group for a two-hour session on fundamentals. At the same time, Mrs. Stanley met with another group who had been working in the field for a good many years, and who had studied writing for radio over a considerable period of time. This group discussed problems of a more advanced nature. Still a third group met with Mr. Stasheff to discuss the problems of writing for educational television, and to analyze a number of TV scripts, made available by Station KETC, the University of Michigan, and the New York City Board of Education Station, WNYE. Enough scripts were available to give each of the half-dozen members in this group two or three samples to take home for further study.

For the second part of the afternoon, the entire Seminar met in joint session once more. Problems posed by members of the Seminar were discussed by the Seminar staff and by members who had had considerable experience in those problems. Space limitations do not permit more than the listing of these: How to Organize and Plan an Interview Series, and an Individual Interview Program; Quality vs. Quantity in Educational Radio Production; Problems in the Use of Student Talent; Problems in Individual Formats.

It had been planned originally to devote an entire day to the problems of writing various program types, and so the last point was postponed until the following day. In the evening the Seminar met again to hear and discuss four more

tape recordings of outstanding programs. It was generally agreed that these audition sessions were most valuable, and should be extended in future Seminars.

Friday, June 11th, found the Seminar meeting as a whole again for the purpose of discussing the problems and particular techniques of several educational formats. Much of the emphasis on Wednesday and Thursday had gone to the dramatic program, so Friday's sessions were devoted to the following formats: (Where comments seemed particularly valuable, they are summarized below.)

A) Adaptations

B) Classroom Participation Programs, with particular emphasis on the "single voice" or "master teacher" type of program. In this connection, the Seminar heard and discussed a tape recording of "Let's Find Out," the popular elementary science program produced at KSLH and currently on the NAEB Tape Network. Mrs. Gertrude Hoffsten, who writes and presents this program, had the following suggestions to offer:

- 1) Check with a sampling of classrooms on the specific needs and teaching techniques of the grade level you have in mind.
- 2) Provide accurate handbooks, listing the equipment which will be needed and stating where it should be when the broadcast starts. Also, designate the location of the student experimenters. (Two are used in "Let's Find Out.") Will the broadcaster tell them to stand, or are they to be standing at a table at the front of the room when the broadcast begins?
- 3) If the writer of the program is not to broadcast it himself, the material should be written for the personality of the person who does broadcast it.
- 4) Use children in the studio, and take your timing for experiments from them -- allowing just a little more than they need. Of course, check the experiments with children of the appropriate grade level before you ever come into the studio.

- 5) If an actor is reading material, slow him down; slow him down far more than seems normal, if you are aiming at an elementary school audience.
- 6) The writer needs to get into elementary classrooms and see how science is taught, in order to use good teaching techniques in the broadcast.

C) Illustrated Narrative

- 1) Give pace and color to single voice or several voices. Use sound, music, characterizations, even unidentified voices coming in from nowhere.
- 2) Sometimes use a narrator who is one of the characters in a dramatic insert.
- 3) Warning: Don't write straight narration when a brief dramatic scene could do the trick better.

D) Documentaries

- 1) Although the Golden Age of the documentary may be over in commercial radio, this is still a wonderful format for educational stations.
- 2) It may be defined as a true drama, a story documented with facts and names and getting much of its impact from its reality.
- 3) Although many fine documentaries use material recorded in the field, when the facts are accurate events may be simulated in the studio.
- 4) Above all, a documentary must have a theme, a point of view expressed by the narrator and "documented" with voices, interviews or scenes.

E) Interviews

- 1) As a pattern of development, Miss Girling suggested that the producer-writer prepare 5 to 7 questions for a fifteen minute program. The questions might follow this pattern:
  - a) First question asks why guest is in this area, and discovers for audience something about his personality, to establish him as a real, living person, not just a voice.

- b) Second main question gets into the main subject of the interview. What are we going to talk about today? Why has this guest been selected to discuss this subject?
- c) Developmental questions follow, to bring out the guest's point of view.
- d) A "Peak Question" should be planned to be reached some ten to eleven-and-a-half minutes into the show. This question is the climax, bringing about the most exciting answer.
- e) At end, the final question can provide the guest with the opportunity of leaving one final thought with the boys and girls in the audience.

2) For a guest from a foreign land, visiting in this country, Miss Girl-ing recommends careful preparation of questions before he arrives at the studio. If possible, do research into the current status of his country, to avoid asking meaningless questions.

3) Brief the guest about his audience: grade level, number and kind of listeners.

4) Use rehearsal to discover new leads, and re-write questions to include material brought up by guest. This is particularly advisable when using high school students as interviewers.

5) One effective technique is to tell guest that you are just doing a run-through or dress rehearsal. Then tape it as you rehearse. If it's good enough for air use, keep it; it will often be more spontaneous than the "air show." But remember: don't expect all guests, particularly important ones, to repeat for a second time material they have told you once or twice already.

6) A technique growing in popularity, where engineering personnel and facilities permit, is to run an interview much longer than the time allotted for the actual program, and then to edit the tapes down to the required timing.

At the conclusion of the discussion of formats and program types, two subjects of general interest were discussed. One was the problem of determining the grade level best suited for the reception of a given series, or for the consideration of a given topic or subject about which a series was to be constructed. The second was a suggestion by a member of the Seminar that the frequently superior production facilities and talent resources of university stations might be combined with the script and content expertness of school systems. As a result of this discussion, the Seminar unanimously voted to have the following statement included in this report:

"The members of the 1954 NAEB Radio Writers' Seminar recommend that school-owned stations and university-owned stations further explore the means of cooperating in the production of in-school radio programs. We are specifically concerned with the prospect of using university talent and studio facilities for the production and taping of scripts provided by the school-owned stations in their own areas."

And with the passing of this resolution, the Seminar was adjourned. Friday evening was very pleasantly devoted to a farewell dinner and a group visit to the St. Louis Municipal Opera.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following findings and opinions are based on two sources: 1) the reactions of the members of the Seminar staff at the conclusion of the five-day session, as expressed in frequent conversation, and as summarized by Miss Betty Girling, and 2) The opinions of the members of the Seminar, as expressed in their "Final Evaluations" and summarized by the editor of this report. (The form used for evaluation reports is attached as Appendix 3.)

- A) There was unanimous agreement on the value of this type of seminar; on the gratitude of those involved, both members and staff, to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation; on the need for this type of continuing training for staff writers at educational radio stations; on the advisability of having further such seminars in the future, with the modifications suggested below.
- B) There was general realization that the Seminar had provided the following desirable outcomes:
  - 1) A sharing of experience between school writers, coming from widely scattered geographic backgrounds, with wide variations in experience and a surprisingly wide spread in working facilities, experience, and station policies.
  - 2) Opportunity for personal evaluation of work, through listening to similar programs by tape from other areas, although a longer seminar, with more listening sessions, would have made it possible for each member to have had one program of his writing auditioned and evaluated by at least one staff member and part of the group.
  - 3) A chance to verbalize one's own writing philosophy and to re-evaluate personal goals in specific areas, such as social studies broadcasts.
  - 4) An exchange of ideas and opinions, through discussion during meetings and in extra-curricular situations.

- 5) Opportunity for meeting other people in the same field, for becoming familiar with their problems, for getting to know them as people.
- 6) Ample proof and assurance that many people consider the work of an in-school radio-television writer of significant importance.
- 7) Acceptance of educational radio writing as a profession, with recognition of professional status, particularly important to some of the writers new to the field.
- 8) Ideal organization, and unsurpassed friendliness and hospitality on the part of the hosts: Superintendent Hickey, Miss Golterman, Miss Fleming, and the entire staff of KSLH.

Despite the success of the Seminar, as attested by the evaluations submitted by the members of the Seminar, most of them anonymously, it was felt by both staff and members that a number of modifications in procedure might make future Seminars for radio writers even more profitable to the participants. The most frequently mentioned of these modifications, as suggested by staff and members, follow:

- A) Allowing more time, if over-all time-table of the pre-Seminar period permits, for the selection of candidates. In addition, brief them and learn more about their backgrounds. (Parenthetically, it is interesting to note that this is exactly what was done with another and subsequent NAEB Workshop -- the TV Production Workshop held at WKAR-TV, Michigan State College, August 23-September 10, 1954. Summaries of qualifications, experience, background, current assignments and probably future activities in educational TV, were made available by the Selection Committee to those in charge of the Workshop some two weeks before the Workshop began. Successful applicants were requested to read the published report of a previous Workshop in the same pattern before reporting for duty.)

B) If budget permits, more time should be allowed for advance staff preparation. Numerous and voluminous letters were exchanged by Miss Fleming and all four members of the Seminar staff, yet one meeting at a central location would have served more effectively to perfect advance planning.

C) Secure greater group empathy and cohesiveness through a closer working-living situation. When staff and group can move together from living quarters to working quarters, or all be housed together at a lodge, so that they eat together and work together, they become a "unit" much more quickly.

D) A longer meeting time is clearly needed, especially if each member of the Seminar is to have one program written by him and produced by his station played for discussion by the group. If a five-day period is allotted for a future writers' seminar, perhaps the orientation session can be held on Sunday night, with five full days available for work sessions.

E) Some members of both staff and Seminar felt that future operations of this kind should be more specialized, i.e., either for truly "experienced" writers or for comparative newcomers to the field. Despite the careful announcements sent to all member stations of the NAEB, the membership of the 1954 Seminar included some writers of only two years' experience or less, and others of more than twelve years' practice of the profession. Yet no one would deny that the less-experienced writers are even more in need of the stimulation and help that such a seminar as this can provide.

F) Perhaps one solution to the above problem, if two completely separate seminars with smaller groups were to prove too expensive, might be a radically different plan of organization, along the following lines:

- 1) All qualified and highly recommended writers from member stations who wished to participate would be enrolled, but would be asked to state

their qualifications and preferences for participation in one of several groupings:

- a) Advanced writers, interested more in the discussion of fine points, re-evaluation of techniques, consideration of philosophies.
- b) Beginning writers, interested in fundamentals, basic techniques, short-cuts and useful devices.

2) The entire group might meet in morning sessions for consideration of problems common to all educational radio writers, then divide into these two divisions for work groups in the afternoon.

3) On another day, the division might be into these two categories:

- a) Scriptwriters at university stations, dealing with a state-wide audience.
- b) Scriptwriters at school system stations, which broadcast primarily to the schools in their own areas.

4) On still another day, the work groups might be divided into:

- a) Writers concerned primarily with programs of general interest, designed to provide chiefly motivation, stimulus and enrichment.
- b) Writers concerned primarily with programs beamed at specific grade levels which can be closely linked to specific curriculum areas, while still providing motivation, stimulation and enrichment.

Such a schedule would permit a wide exchange of ideas at sessions of the whole Seminar, combined with practical work sessions in which the writer would be working with those who share his own background and problems.

These modifications are suggested in the interests of providing an even more valuable experience to all participants, in the limited time which could be made available for an In-school Program Writers' Seminar.

Appendix 1

## Roster of Participants

<u>Name</u>	<u>Station</u>	<u>Address</u>
Mirjam Ahlman	WSHS	Sewanhaka H.S., Floral Park, Long Island, N.Y.
Larry Beauchamp	WBAA	Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana
William Bender	WUOM	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan
Jess Burkett	WNAD	University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma
*Elizabeth Carlson	WHA	University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin
Milburn Carlson	WHA	University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin
Mildred Cowell	WTDS	Toledo Public Schools, Toledo, Ohio
Ruth Dockery	KSLH	St. Louis Public Schools, St. Louis, Missouri
Sara Ensor	WFBE	Flint Public Schools, Flint, Michigan
Christine Fitzsimmons	WLSU	Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La.
Ruth Foltz	WBOE	Cleveland Public Schools, Cleveland, Ohio
Marie Guthrie	WBGO	Newark Public Schools, Newark, New Jersey
Rose Jeanne Jones	KANW	Albuquerque H.S., Albuquerque, New Mexico
Fan Kissen	WNYE	New York City Public Schools, New York City
Jack Metzger	WTHS	Dade County Public Schools, Miami, Florida
Carl Moody	WDTR	Detroit Public Schools, Detroit, Michigan
Mark Munn	WFIU	Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
Marylou Reed	KUOM	University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.
Fred Sederholm	WSUI	State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa
Bernice Setzer	KDPS	629 Third Street, Des Moines 9, Iowa
*Josephine Williams	KANW	Albuquerque H.S., Albuquerque, New Mexico

\*Attended the Seminar at their own expense.

## FINAL SCHEDULE OF PROCEEDINGS

Monday, June 7: - Orientation Session at the apartment of Miss Marguerite Fleming. 6-10 p.m. Welcome by Superintendent Hickey. Brief remarks by Dr. Harry Skornia, Executive Director, NAEB; Frank E. Schooley, Treasurer, NAEB; and by staff members. Featured address by Dr. Harold Hand.

Tuesday, June 8: - Miss Gertrude McCance, speaking on Educational Broadcasting in Morning Canada; Why We Broadcast; What We Broadcast.

Afternoon - Miss McCance, leading discussion on Why We Write and What We Write.  
- Self-introduction by staff and members of Seminar.

Evening - Visit to the Goldenrod, last showboat on the Mississippi.

Wednesday, June 9:-Mrs. Helen Stanley, speaking on The Writer's Organization of Morning Materials; Preparation for Scriptwriting; the Pre-Writing Period.

- Guest Speaker: Miss Esther Aschmeyer, "How a Radio Planning Committee works with the station on Social Studies Programs."

Afternoon - Miss Betty Girling, speaking on Organizing a Series.  
- Guest Speaker: Dr. John Whitney, "How a Planning Committee Helps with Science Programs."  
- Experiences of members of the Seminar in organizing various series which had proved particularly successful. Playing of excerpts from these series.

Evening - Auditioning and discussing three taped programs: Music in the Making, It's Fun to Draw, and People and Places.

Thursday, June 10:-Visit studios of Station KETC-TV; tour of TV facilities; address Morning by Mr. Richard Goggin, Manager of KETC.

Afternoon - Division into three groups:  
Miss Girling: Basic Fundamentals of Radio Writing  
Mrs. Stanley: Problems in writing raised by the program Burlap Bags  
Mr. Stasheff: Script formats and program types in Educational TV  
- Followed by group discussion: The Problem of Quality vs. Quantity in Educational Radio.

Evening

- Auditioning and discussing four taped programs: Hearthfire, Z. T. Grubney and Fall, "Cats Sit Fat" from the series Let's Write, and "Commodore Perry" from the series A Name to Remember.

Friday, June 11th:-Discussion of the Particular Problems of Various Types:

Morning

- Adaptations
- Classroom Participation Programs
- Illustrated Narratives

Afternoon

- Documentaries
- Interviews
- Followed by general discussion of problems of assigning grade levels to programs of various types, and of the suggestion for university-school system cooperation.
- Farewell Dinner and visit to the St. Louis Municipal Opera

Evening

Appendix 3

## NAEB WRITERS' SEMINAR - STATION KSLH

June 7-11, 1954

SEMINAR MEMBERS' EVALUATION REPORT

1. Suggest any changes in the set-up, organization, etc., of such a Seminar as this which you would like to see made if it were given again. Cover such items as over-all program, facilities, materials, opportunities, etc.
2. Please describe briefly or simply state:  
A - your most valuable experience in the past week.  
B - your least valuable experience in the past week.
3. In what way, if any, will your presence at this Seminar affect radio and TV programming and production at your institution?
4. What were your aims in joining this Seminar? To what extent were they realized? To what extent were they not realized?
5. Add any other comments on the Seminar which may occur to you.
6. What programs designed for use in classrooms did you hear that you would like to recommend for distribution on the NAEB Tape Network. Please comment.

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at the Wisconsin Historical Society as part of  
"Unlocking the Airwaves: Revitalizing an Early Public and Educational Radio Collection."



A collaboration among the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities,  
University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Communication Arts,  
and Wisconsin Historical Society.

Supported by a Humanities Collections and Reference Resources grant from  
the National Endowment for the Humanities



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